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THE BATMAN
ONCE A CROOK, ALWAYS A CROOK--!-- RIGHT? WELL--YES AND NO-- AND HERE'S THE WILD AND WOOLY SAGA OF A WOULD-BE EX-CROOK TO PROVE IT BOTH WAYS! BUT EITHER WAY, IT MAKES FOR A FAST-PACED, FASCINATING AND FEROCIOUS STORY WHEN...
"The MAD HATTER GOES STRAIGHT!"
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PROLOGUE
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OKAY, MEXICAN HAT SEQUENCE! GIRLS DANCE OUT...FORM ROSETTE AROUND LINDA SUE!
SHE TAKES HAT OUT OF BOX, PUTS IT ON...BACK TO LINE AND KICK TO FIRST CUT!
THE GLAMOROUS G-E REVUE ...A PERENNIAL PRIZE-WINNER ...ALWAYS ATTRACTS A LARGE AUDIENCE OF PEOPLE IN THE BUSINESS...
ALL RIGHT... PLACES!
A MINUTE LATER, ON THE DOWNBEAT...
G-E REVUE
...THE ROSETTE FORMS--EVERYTHING GOING BEAUTIFULLY...
...UNTIL--
--A DERBY?!?
THE NEXT AMAZING MOMENT--
G-E REVUE
--THE HUGE G-E REVUE SIGN FLASHES A DIFFERENT MESSAGE--AND LINDA SUE THRUSTS THE DERBY AT EVERYONE IN SIGHT--TAKING UP A COLLECTION!
WHAT'S MORE--THEY EAGERLY CROWD AROUND HER TO CONTRIBUTE--
--STRIPPING THEMSELVES OF RINGS, WATCHES, JEWELS, WALLETS!

SHE THEN GOES TO THE DOOR--
--WHICH OPENS TO REVEAL--
--THE MAD HATTER--JERVIS TETCH--A MALICIOUS ZANY WITH A FLAIR FOR STYLE--AND A GREAT HUNGER FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY!
WITH THE NET RESULT--AND A NICE NET IT IS...
MUCHAS GRACIAS!
THEN THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT--AND IT'S OVER!
EXIT
CAB TV
IT WILL BE SOME HOURS BEFORE THEY BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS HAPPENED...
BUT, SOON AFTER--IN THE ABANDONED AND BOARDED-UP RESTAURANT WHERE THE MAD-HATTER AND HIS HAT-BAND HAVE MADE THEIR H.Q.--AN ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT MYSTERY IS MANIFESTING ITSELF...
WHAT'S WRONG, HATTER? WHY THE GLOOM?
EVERYTHING WORKED FINE--AND YOU MADE A BUNDLE!
YES... I SHOULD BE PROUD, JUBILANT!
THE SCOPOLAMINE* IN THE WATER COOLER AND COFFEE MADE THEM AS DOCILE AND SUGGESTIBLE AS LAMBS...
THE HAT-SWITCH WAS SIMPLE... AND WHEN MY EDITED VERSION OF THEIR SIGN TOLD THEM TO GIVE--THEY GAVE! BUT...
*A POWERFUL HYPNOTIC DRUG USED TO PRODUCE "TWILIGHT SLEEP." --JULIE
3

SOMEHOW IT'S ALL EMPTY... MEANINGLESS-- AND I THINK I MAY KNOW WHY!
WHEN I WAS A YOUNGSTER, MY GRANDFATHER HAD A HAT STORE... AND THAT WAS WHERE MY LIFELONG PRE-OCCUPATION WITH HATS--MY HANGUP, IF YOU WILL--ALL BEGAN...
"IN A FRONT WINDOW, THERE WAS A WONDERFUL DISPLAY OF ALL SORTS OF HEADGEAR... FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD..."
HAT STORE
"I'D STUDY THAT WINDOW, CHOOSE A HAT... THEN I'D GO INSIDE, PUT IT ON-- AND MY IMAGINATION WOULD JUST CARRY ME AWAY!"
"I'D SAVE MY CREW IN A STORM AT SEA--"
"--OR FIGHT A RIFF UPRISING FOR THE HONOR OF THE FOREIGN LEGION--!"
"--OR LEAP TO THE DEFENSE OF MY COMRADES-AT-ARMS!"
BUT NOW, ALL THOSE OLD, INNOCENT, EXHILARATING THRILLS ELUDE ME... AND WHY? --BECAUSE THEY WERE BASED ON DUTY--AND HONOR--AND LAW!
BY USING MY IMAGINATION ONLY FOR CRIME, I'VE GROWN STALE AND WEARY... AND THE KICK I ONCE FOUND IN CRIME IS GONE FOREVER!
AND SO, MY CRIMINAL CAREER IS FINISHED! I'M GOING TO RECAPTURE THOSE HALCYON DAYS OF YOUTH!--I'M GOING STRAIGHT!
FROM THIS MOMENT ON, I CAST ASIDE THE BLACK HAT OF BANDITRY--FOR THE WHITE HAT OF HEROISM!
4
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...TO MORE ROMANTIC PURSUITS THAN THOSE WHICH ORDINARILY OCCUPY HIM IN HIS SECRET IDENTITY AS THE FABLED BATMAN--
KIM, YOU HAVE SUCH A LOVELY, MYSTERIOUS SMILE ON YOUR FACE! CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT?
THAT'S EASY--CHINESE FOOD!
WHAT?! WILL YOU KINDLY EXPLAIN WHY CHINESE FOOD SHOULD BE ON YOUR MIND AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
WHY? BECAUSE WE JUST DROVE PAST A GORGEOUS GINKO TREE!
SUDDENLY--
GIMME YOUR NECKLACE!
I'LL TAKE YOUR MONEY!
A MOMENT THAT LASTS AN ETERNITY...
I...I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND IT.
IF THERE WERE ONLY ONE, I COULD TAKE HIM AND SOMEHOW PRETEND I GOT LUCKY! BUT WITH TWO...
...I'D HAVE TO DO AN UNMISTAKABLE JOB... SOMETHING WELL BEYOND BRUCE WAYNE'S PROWESS... SO--
I'LL FIND IT!
WRONG, VARMINT!
HUH?
5

INCREDULOUSLY, BRUCE WAYNE WATCHES-- AS WITH SKILLED AND SWIFT DISPATCH...
SORRY ABOUT THIS, FOLKS!
IF YOU'RE FROM OUT OF TOWN...
...I JUST HOPE THIS DOESN'T GIVE YOU A BAD IMPRESSION OF GOTHAM CITY!
AFTER WHICH--
THIS SHOULD KEEP 'EM TILL THE NEXT POLICE PATROL COMES BY!
WHO ARE YOU--?
SHERIFF OF THIS PARK! SHERIFF TETCH IS THE NAME-- AND LAW-AND-ORDER IS MY GAME!
HOW MARVELOUS! I NEVER KNEW GOTHAM CITY HAD A SHERIFF IN THE PARK! ISN'T THERE SOME WAY I CAN REWARD YOU?
WELL, MA'AM, NOW THAT YOU PUT IT THAT WAY... I KNOW GOOD PEARLS WHEN I SEE 'EM--
THANK YOU, MA'AM... MUCH OBLIGED!
AND WITH THAT--
BRUCE! THE SHERIFF JUST ROBBED ME! I THINK I'M LOSING MY MIND!
NO, DEAR-- JUST YOUR PEARLS!
DRIVER, GET OUT AT THE 59TH STREET GATE AND WAIT THERE FOR ME! I'LL CALL THE POLICE ON A PARK PHONE!

IN MOMENTS THE TRANSFORMATION IS COMPLETE AND THE BATMAN IS IN ACTION!
THERE HE GOES-- CROSSING THE MEADOW TO A WEST EXIT! GOOD! I CAN STICK CLOSE TO THE TREES AND GET AN ANGLE SHOT AT HIM!
THE ANGLE SHOT--
WHA--?
BUT AS THE MOUNT REARS--
SLAM!
UNN! MUST HAVE HITCHED THE ROPE TO HIS SADDLE! NO TIME FOR ME TO MANEUVER OUT OF IT!
7

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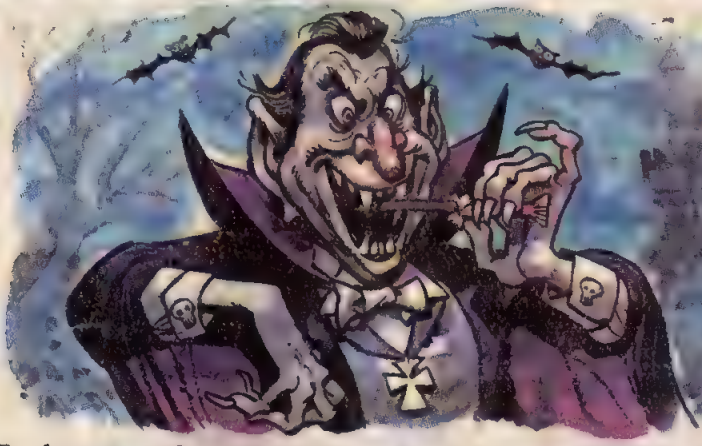

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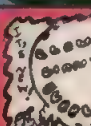

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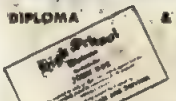

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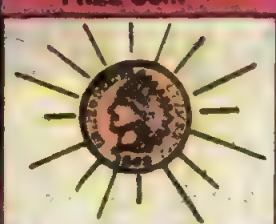

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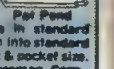
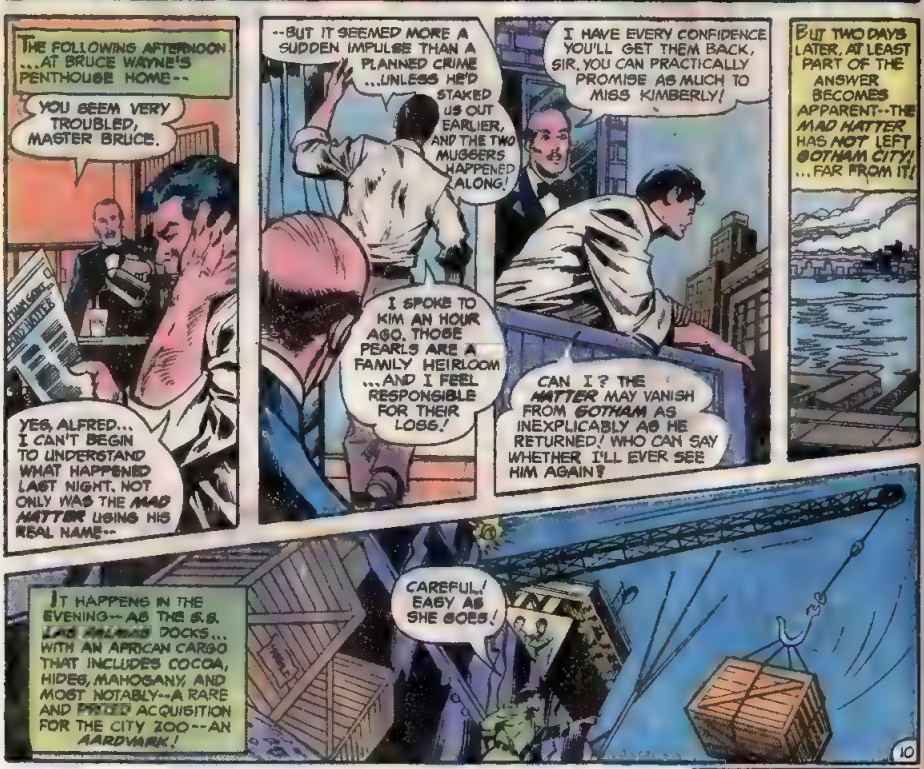


FIRST TIME I EVER PUNCHED ANYBODY INTO AN ESCAPE!
GO FIGURE IT!
FOR THAT MATTER--GO FIGURE ANY PART OF THIS!
AND YET, STRANGELY ENOUGH--IF NOT MORE THAN ENOUGH--THE BATMAN'S BAFFLEMENT AND GALLING FRUSTRATION ARE AT THIS MOMENT BEING
--LITERALLY--
--BY THE VERY PERSON WHO CAUSED THEM --SHERIFF (SO HE SAYS) TETCH!
OH, SHE TOOK A TAXI HOME, SIR... ALL SHOOK UP ABOUT BEING ROBBED--AND THEN YOU RUNNING OFF! SHE SAID TO SAY GOOD NIGHT.
A PERFECT EVENING... IN PERFECT RUINS!
SHORTLY AFTERWARD...
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, SIR?... I FLAGGED A POLICE CAR--THEY'RE IN THE PARK LOOKING FOR YOU AND THAT CRAZY SHERIFF FELLER! DID YOU--?
NEVER MIND THAT! WHERE'S THE YOUNG LADY WHO WAS WITH ME?

I BELIEVED IN YOU--AND YOU LET ME DOWN!
WHY DID I DO IT? HOW COULD I CHANGE FROM GOOD SAMARITAN SHERIFF TO OUTLAW IN ONE MOMENT? I TRIED TO BE A HERO--AND ENDED UP A CROOK!
I DIDN'T EVEN WANT THESE PEARLS... AT LEAST, I DIDN'T THINK I WANTED THEM! I REALLY FELT I WAS A SHERIFF--BREAKING UP THAT ROBBERY FULFILLED ME!
AND IT ALL ENDED WITH ME LUCKY TO BARELY GET AWAY FROM THE BATMAN!
WHAT WENT WRONG? WAS I TOO OPTIMISTIC--EXPECTING AN OVERNIGHT CHANGE, AFTER SPENDING MOST OF MY LIFE AS A CRIMINAL?
MAYBE IT WAS TOO DRASTIC FOR MY FIRST ATTEMPT?
YES... YES... THAT'S IT! I SHOULD HAVE TRIED ANOTHER ROLE ... SOMETHING LESS INTIMATELY INVOLVED WITH THE LAW ITSELF!
HMMMM... LET ME THINK...
CHAPTER TWO!


THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON ...AT BRUCE WAYNE'S PENTHOUSE HOME--
YOU SEEM VERY TROUBLED, MASTER BRUCE.
YES, ALFRED... I CAN'T BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT. NOT ONLY WAS THE MAD HATTER USING HIS REAL NAME--
--BUT IT SEEMED MORE A SUDDEN IMPULSE THAN A PLANNED CRIME ...UNLESS HE'D STAKED US OUT EARLIER, AND THE TWO MUGGERS HAPPENED ALONG!
I SPOKE TO KIM AN HOUR AGO. THOSE PEARLS ARE A FAMILY HEIRLOOM ...AND I FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR LOSS!
I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE YOU'LL GET THEM BACK, SIR. YOU CAN PRACTICALLY PROMISE AS MUCH TO MISS KIMBERLY!
CAN I? THE HATTER MAY VANISH FROM GOTHAM AS INEXPLICABLY AS HE RETURNED! WHO CAN SAY WHETHER I'LL EVER SEE HIM AGAIN?
BUT TWO DAYS LATER, AT LEAST PART OF THE ANSWER BECOMES APPARENT--THE MAD HATTER HAS NOT LEFT GOTHAM CITY! ...FAR FROM IT!
IT HAPPENS IN THE EVENING--AS THE S.S. LAO MAMBO DOCKS... WITH AN AFRICAN CARGO THAT INCLUDES COCOA, HIDES, MAHOGANY, AND MOST NOTABLY--A RARE AND PRIZED ACQUISITION FOR THE CITY ZOO--AN AARDVARK!
CAREFUL! EASY AS SHE GOES!



CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

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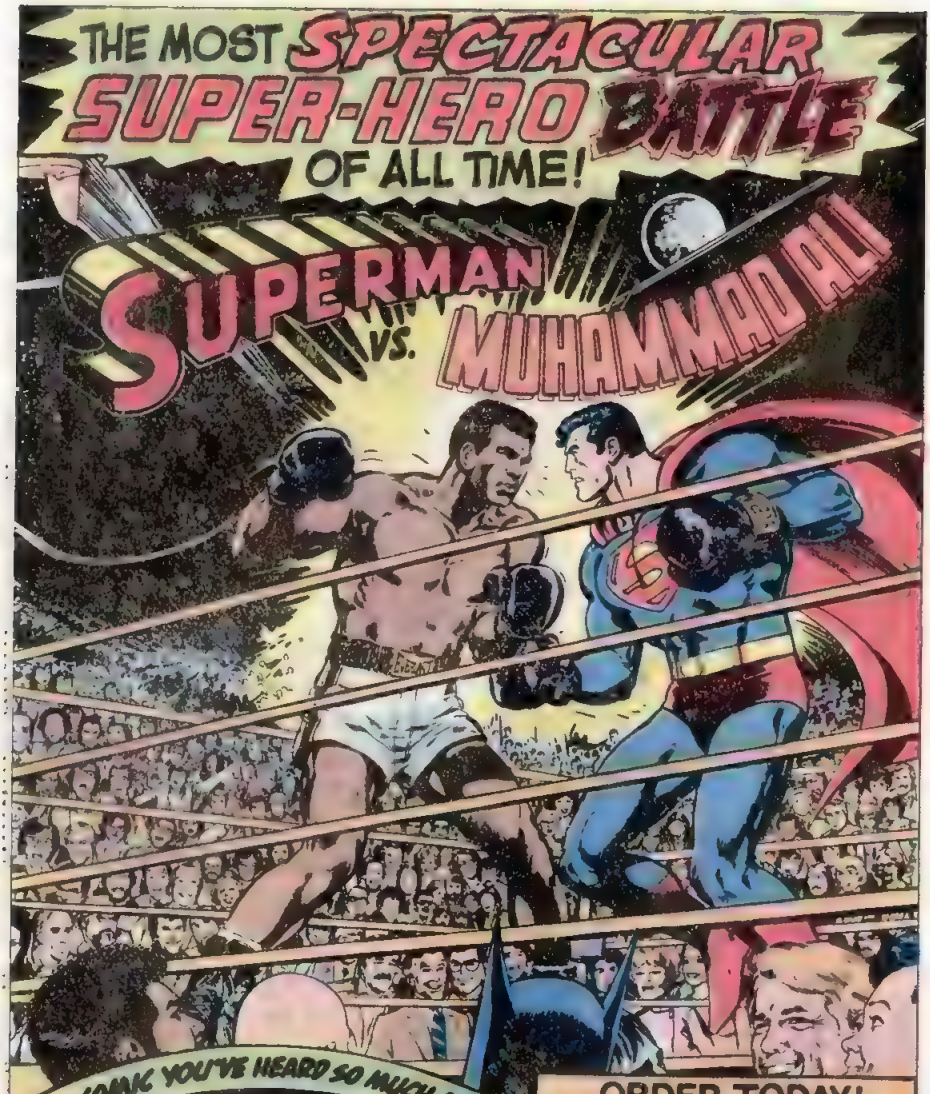


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BUT--DESPITE ALL PRECAUTIONS...
LOOK OUT!
THE AARDVARK'S ESCAPING!
IN MINUTES--THE POLICE WAVEBAND TRANSMITS A MOST UNUSUAL CALL--WHICH IS HEARD BY A MOST UNUSUAL PERSON!
CARS 14, 32, 6! PROCEED TO SOUTH STREET PIER AND RENDER ASSISTANCE! --AN AARDVARK IS LOOSE... THAT'S A-A-R-D-V-A-R-K. GOOD LUCK, BOYS!
LUCK? THEY'RE LUCKY I HEARD THIS! HERE'S MY CHANCE TO GIVE SOME REAL HELP!
FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER... ALONG THE RIVERBANK NEAR THE SOUTH STREET PIER...A SCENE OF TURMOIL AND COMMOTION...
KEEP DIGGING! IT'S DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE!
IT'S NO USE! THAT THING DIGS FASTER THAN WE CAN! WE'LL HAVE TO GET A STEAM SHOVEL!
OKAY, SEND FOR A STEAM SHOVEL!
GET MORE LIGHTS HERE!
CAREFUL, SERGEANT! WHEN THEY CORNERED IT, IT ROLLED OVER ON ITS BACK AND STRUCK WITH ALL FOUR FEET! LOOK AT THESE WOUNDS!
THEN--ALL AT ONCE--A STRANGE AND IMPERIOUS FIGURE APPEARS...
NO--STOP THE DIGGING AT ONCE! AND TURN OFF ALL THE LIGHTS!
WHAT? AND WHO THE DEVIL MIGHT YOU BE?
MAJOR TETCH OF THE RHODESIA ZOO! I WAS ON THAT SHIP!
NOW FOLLOW MY ORDERS AND I'LL GET THAT AARDVARK FOR YOU! UTMOST CAUTION MUST BE EXERCISED HERE..
--EVEN A MODERATE BLOW ON THE HEAD CAN BE FATAL TO IT!
OKAY, MAJOR, YOU GOT IT! TAKE OVER!
THE "MAJOR'S" ORDERS ARE CARRIED OUT... THE CROWD RECEDES... ALL IS DARK AND QUIET... THE MINUTES PASS...
WHAT'S THAT WOOD YOU PUT AROUND THE BURROW, MAJOR?
OLD DECAYED LUMBER, FULL OF TERMITES--ITS FAVORITE FOOD! THAT'LL BRING IT UP SOON ENOUGH!
ANOTHER BRIEF INTERVAL--AND--PRECISELY AS PREDICTED...
GOT IT!
11

GREAT WORK, MAJOR! THANKS A MILLION!
NOT AT ALL--
--A MILLION?!?
AND WITH THE "MAJOR" STILL IN COMMAND...
SERGEANT, GET A HEAVY CRATE AND A TRUCK! I'LL WAIT HERE!!
EVERYBODY GET BACK--AND LET'S HAVE ABSOLUTE DARKNESS! THIS IS A NOCTURNAL CREATURE--LIGHT MAKES IT FEEL ENDANGERED!
BUT WHEN THE SERGEANT RETURNS...
MAJOR--WHERE ARE YOU? ...MAJOR?
I DON'T GET THIS!
IN SHORT ORDER--THE ANSWER...
HE STOLE THE AARDVARK!--WHAT FOR?
HE WAS CLIMBING UP THOSE ROCKS... TO THE ROAD... WITH THE ANIMAL IN THE NET... OVER HIS BACK! I STARTED TO SAY SOMETHING--AND HE SLUGGED ME!
THE NEXT MORNING--THE "WHAT FOR?" IS CLEAR--AND ASTOUNDING!
Daily
AARDVARK HIJACKED! IMPOSTOR PHONES DEMAND FOR MILLION DOLLAR RANSOM!
WELL, ALFRED, IT LOOKS LIKE THE M.M. HAS GOT HIMSELF A NEW M.O.!
I WAS ALMOST GLAD TO READ IT, SIR! NOW WE KNOW HE'S STILL IN TOWN!
IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW, THE MAD HATTER MAKES HIS PRESENCE INCREASINGLY EVIDENT--AND PAINFUL!
CONSTRUCTION SITE STICKUP!...PHONY HARDHAT HEISTS PAYROLL!
FAKE FIREFIGHTER CRACKS SAFE AS BUILDING BURNS TO GROUND!
BOGUS ARTIST COPIES MUSEUM MASTERPIECE --THEN STEALS IT!
GOTHAM NEWS
ARMY FUNDS RIPPED OFF! CROOK IMPERSONATES RECRUITMENT OFFICER!
12
CONTINUED ON PAGE SIXTEEN

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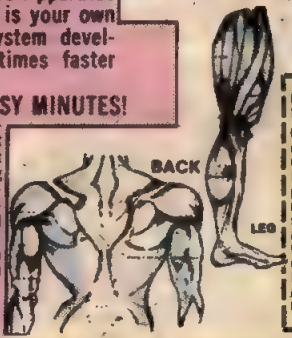

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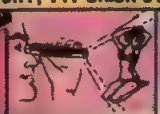

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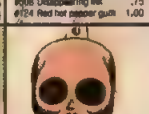

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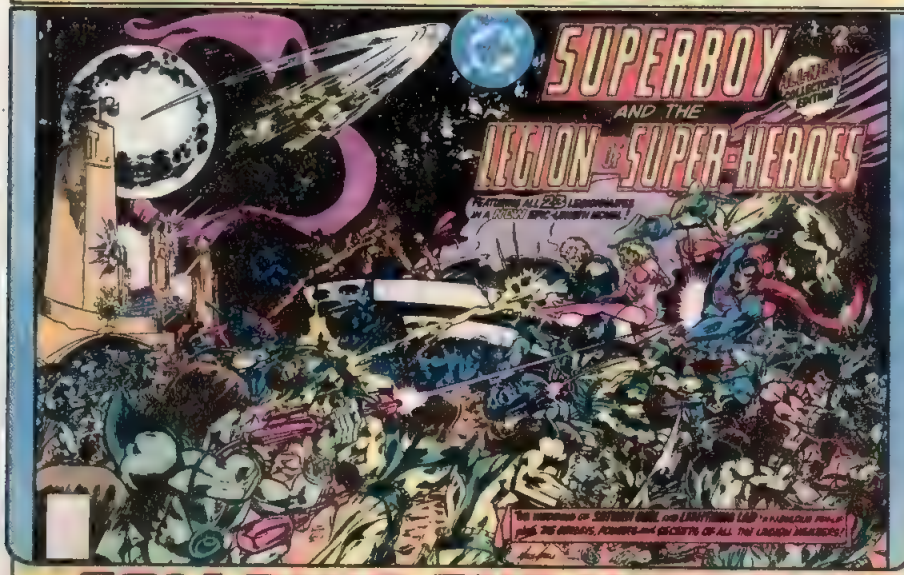
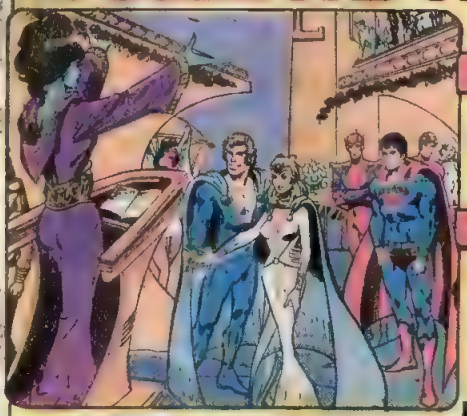



# ...FOLLOWS THE WEDDING OF THE 30th CENTURY



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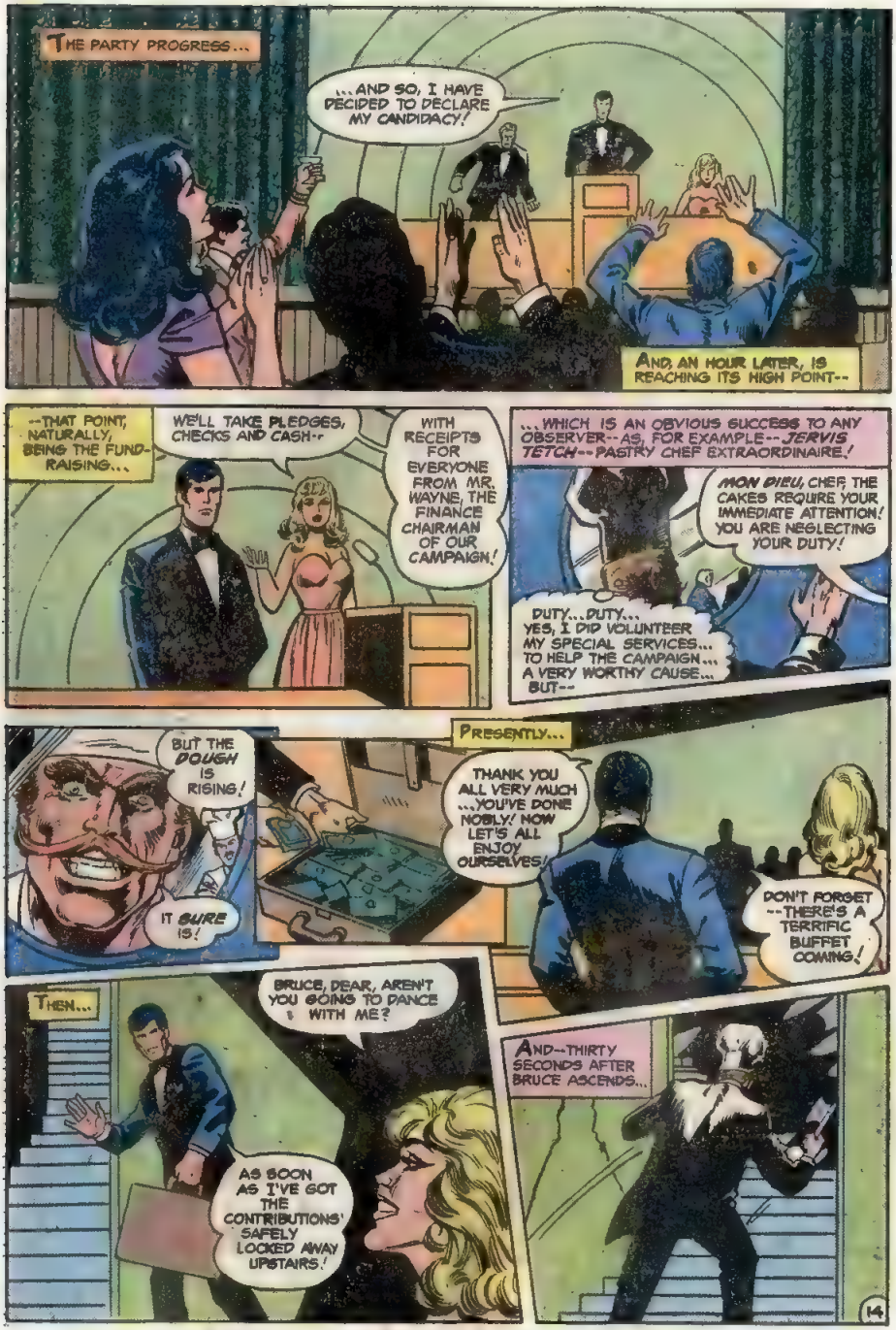
THE SCENE: COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE AT POLICE H.Q.--
THE BASIC TROUBLE IS--THERE'S NO WAY TO ANTICIPATE HIM,
IT'S AS THOUGH HE WERE ACTING ON A SUDDEN IMPULSE EVERY TIME--
--BECAUSE THERE'S NO RHYME OR REASON TO WHAT HE DOES! EITHER HE WANTS A MILLION FOR AN ANIMAL WORTH MUCH LESS...OR HE CRACKS A SAFE AND GETS CHICKENFEED...
...OR HE STEALS A CEZANNE ...OR HE TAKES THE ARMY FOR A FEW THOUSAND BUCKS!
SO--?
SO, COMMISSIONER, YOU KNOW THE STORY ABOUT MOHAMMED AND THE MOUNTAIN?
UH-HUH... WHO'S WHICH?
I'M THE MOUNTAIN AND HE'S MOHAMMED!. I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM COME TO ME--WITH A LITTLE SCHEME THAT INVOLVES BRUCE WAYNE AND JASON BARD!
JASON BARD--THE PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR?
THAT'S THE ONE! HE'S PLANNING TO RUN FOR D.A.--AND BRUCE IS GOING TO THROW A BIG, PUBLICIZED PARTY FOR BARD TO MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND ASK FOR CONTRIBUTIONS!--GET IT?
N-NO.
YOU WILL--THREE NIGHTS FROM NOW!
THREE NIGHTS LATER...A FESTIVE, GLITTERING OCCASION...
BRUCE, MY BOY, A CAPITAL IDEA--OPENING WAYNE MANOR AGAIN FOR THIS PARTY--
--JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!
THANK YOU, JUDGE... AND NOW I'D LIKE YOU ALL TO MEET THE GUEST OF HONOR, MR. JASON BARD!
AH, YES, I BELIEVE WE'VE MET BEFORE.
QUITE SO, JUDGE HARKNESS... SHORTLY AFTER I RETURNED FROM VIETNAM...
AT A SEMINAR WHERE YOU SPOKE ON CAREERS FOR VETERANS IN CRIMINOLOGY... AND STARTED ME OFF.


THE PARTY PROGRESS...
...AND SO, I HAVE DECIDED TO DECLARE MY CANDIDACY!
AND, AN HOUR LATER, IS REACHING ITS HIGH POINT--
--THAT POINT, NATURALLY, BEING THE FUND-RAISING...
WE'LL TAKE PLEDGES, CHECKS AND CASH--
WITH RECEIPTS FOR EVERYONE FROM MR. WAYNE, THE FINANCE CHAIRMAN OF OUR CAMPAIGN!
...WHICH IS AN OBVIOUS SUCCESS TO ANY OBSERVER--AS, FOR EXAMPLE--JERVIS TETCH--PASTRY CHEF EXTRAORDINAIRE!
MON DIEU, CHEF THE CAKES REQUIRE YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION! YOU ARE NEGLECTING YOUR DUTY!
DUTY...DUTY... YES, I DID VOLUNTEER MY SPECIAL SERVICES... TO HELP THE CAMPAIGN... A VERY WORTHY CAUSE... BUT--
PRESENTLY...
BUT THE DOUGH IS RISING!
IT SURE IS!
THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH ...YOU'VE DONE NOBLY! NOW LET'S ALL ENJOY OURSELVES!
DON'T FORGET --THERE'S A TERRIFIC BUFFET COMING!
THEN...
BRUCE, DEAR, AREN'T YOU GOING TO DANCE WITH ME?
AS SOON AS I'VE GOT THE CONTRIBUTIONS SAFELY LOCKED AWAY UPSTAIRS!
AND--THIRTY SECONDS AFTER BRUCE ASCENDS...
14

AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS... A DOOR AJAR... A LIGHT WITHIN...
THE MAD HATTER ADVANCES...TAKES A TENTATIVE STEP INSIDE--
--AND--
THE NEXT INSTANT...
THAT'S A PASTRY CHEF'S HAT YOU'RE WEARING, TETCH!
BATMAN?
WHAT POSSIBLE USE CAN YOU HAVE FOR A CLEAVER?
THIS!!
BUT--
CHUNK!
NOW, MY FRIEND--
15

WHUP!
KLOWP!
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR HEAD--
--SO I THINK--MAYBE I'LL RESHAPE IT--
K-BOK!
--AND BRING IT TO A POINT--
--SO THE ONLY HAT--
--THAT'LL EVER FIT YOU AGAIN--
--WILL BE A DUNCE CAP!
THERE! YOU NEVER LOOKED BETTER!



CONCLUDED ON 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING

## MONEYMAKER

Insert a blank piece of paper, turn the knob and OUT COMES A REAL DOLLAR BILL! Insert the dollar and it changes to a $5 then the $5 changes to $10.

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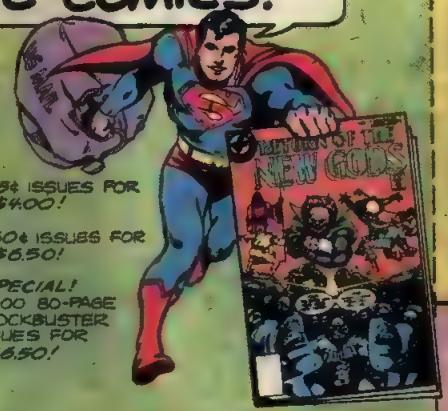


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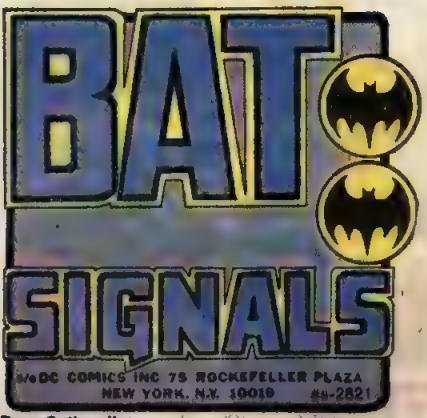
THE FOLLOWING EVENING ..
YOU SEE, COMMISSIONER, ONCE THE HATTER HEARD ABOUT THE PARTY, HE WAS IRRESISTIBLY DRAWN THERE!
IRRESISTIBLY--?
BECAUSE FIRST, IT INVOLVED JASON BARD THROWING HIS HAT INTO THE RING--
--AND SECOND, PASSING THE HAT AROUND! CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT, THOSE SYMBOLS WERE BOUND TO EXCITE HIS IMAGINATION!
--WHICH THEY DID!
WE'VE RECOVERED EVERYTHING--INCLUDING THE AARDVARK, ALL INTACT--AND THE WAY HE EXPLAINS IT...
...AND IT RINGS TRUE...
...HE WAS ACTUALLY TRYING TO REFORM -- AND KEPT FAILING!
TOO BAD! IT WOULD HAVE MADE A GREAT HEADLINE -- "THE MAD HATTER GOES STRAIGHT!"
IT STILL DOES! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ADD-- "TO JAIL!"
AND NOW, SIR--
--I'VE GOT URGENT BUSINESS WAITING!
SOON AFTERWARD... THE URGENT BUSINESS--
BUT, BRUCE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND.. WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?
TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME? VERY SIMPLE!
DRIVER, MAY I BORROW YOUR HAT A MOMENT?
SURE... YES, SIR... I GUESS SO!
BRUCE TAKES THE HAT--THEN...
OBSERVE!
MY PEARLS! BRUCE, YOU DARLING, HOW ON EARTH DID YOU EVER GET THEM BACK?
A TRICK, MY DEAR--A SIMPLE HAT TRICK--AND WE MAGICIANS NEVER EXPLAIN OUR TRICKS!
TWO HOURS LATER...
WE'VE BEEN AROUND THE PARK THRU TIMES, SIR! WHAT NOW?
KEEP DRIVING! YOU'RE DOING GREAT!
AND SO AM I!
THE END
NEXT ISSUE "CAGE OF THE CRIMSON CRITTER"




**Dear Gothamites,**

So! I said two letters ago that I suspected **Batman** was masquerading as one of the villains at the "trial"; possibly as **Two-Face**, and now it looks like I was right. I have no doubt that **Two-Face** can behave rationally for long periods, but it seemed odd that he could go so far without even a hint of his usual insanity. Maybe he **would** summon **Superman** as a witness if his coin came up right, but could he convince **Supes** to award all the villains amnesty, especially since one of them is supposed to be **Batman's** murderer? In any case, I'm enjoying the "trials" so much, I'm willing to grant you some dramatic license.

"The Testimony of Luthor" (in **#293**) admirably sidesteps two traps I thought you'd fall into. **Batman** is not forced to battle super-weaponry of a criminal far too powerful for him, and you didn't find a flimsy reason why **Luthor** should go after a hero he cares nothing about. **Batman** is merely a pawn in another of **Luthor's** schemes to kill **Superman** and it's therefore ironic that the "pawn" should play a major part in foiling the plot. It could be argued that **Luthor** might have switched **Superman's** mind into another body with far less trouble, but presumably the villain wanted the sense of challenge and the artistic touch egotists like **Luthor** love so.

David V. Reed should be commended for putting just the right amount of science-fiction in the story. There's too much for a regular **Batman** tale, but just the right mix for a **Batman-Superman** team-up. It helps considerably that the story takes place amid realistic settings, that there is nothing visually flamboyant like a stadium-snatching involved, and that the brain-switching has a spookiness about it that fits in **Batman's** world.

And Reed handled **Luthor** very well, capturing the obsession for revenge, his envy of **Superman's** powers (which we see when he announces his plan to switch his own mind into **Superman's** body), and the tremendous ego that makes him feel superior to **Batman** and his fellow criminals. The sight of **Luthor** hammering his fist in despair and self-contempt at learning he'd failed was just right.

**PETER SANDERSON**
**27 Gov. Belcher Lane**
**Milton, MA 02186**

**Your detective work about *Two-Face* has been matched by a self-proclaimed private eye, who also claims to have cracked the case . . . next up!—BR**

**Dear Comic Book People:**

I am an extremely talented detective who will some day be world-famous. I have solved such cases as "The Mystery of the Kidnapped Pickle" and the Arnold Ferguson murder. (Arnold was, as you may have read in the papers, the butcher at Fred's Meat Market.)

Anyway, I have now solved the case of who murdered **The Batman.** From the clues in **#293**, I figure **Bats** is still alive and posing as **Two-Face!** How's that for a deduction?

**JOE MAYONAISE**
**1777 Puppet Street**
**Suburbia, LA 92930**

**We already *know* that! We want to know who kidnapped the pickle! Or is this Mayonaise just covering up a lot of baloney?—BR**

**Dear Bat-People,**

What are you people trying to do? The past few issues of **BATMAN** have not been among the best in history! In fact, fiascos is closer to it!

The whole concept of the villain-trials is the pits. If handled correctly, the concept might make it, but as is it's nowhere. **Batman** villains are supposed to be smart enough to know that they can't gather in such large numbers without attracting attention. (For that matter, David V. Reed should know it too!) Commissioner Gordon, though not always presented that way, is enough of a cop to know what's going on.

And then, to top it, in **#293 Superman** flies into the den of super-villains and grants them all immunity. The least he should do is tell the Commissioner where to find them.

**DOUG TONKS**
**5060 Marc Drive**
**Nashville, TN 37211**

**As you found out in *#294*, Commissioner Gordon was in on the scheme too—which is why *he* didn't break up the trials! And if *Superman* promised the villains immunity, he would keep his word—and not tell anybody where they were!—BR**

**Dear Editor:**

"The Testimony of Luthor" was an excellent chapter, perhaps the best thus far. It was by and large a magnanimous testimony to the skills, wits and detective abilities of **The Batman. Luthor's** claim to have done in **Batman** incidentally as a way to get at **Superman** was a nice change of pace from villains who were out to get the **Batman**, the whole **Batman** and nothing but the **Batman!**

**Superman's** testimony was a surprise, although I should have suspected he wouldn't be too far behind his bald-headed foe. And the Man of Steel's promise to let the whole courtroom of baddies go free served to point up the fact that even when **Batman** shows up alive next issue, his Rogues' Gallery will be able to get up and walk away scot free since all they can be guilty of is telling tall tales!

**SCOTT GIBSON**
**2711 S. Pinehurst Drive**
**Evergreen, CO 80439**

Dear Editor:

I think Neal Adams or Dick Giordano should draw **BATMAN #300!**

**MIKE VILLA**
**248 Lyman Street**
**Holyoke, MA 01040**

**We've beat you to the punch, Mike! Dick has already picked up the script for that double-length special entitled . . . oops, we're out of room again!—Bob Rozakis**

# DC Publishorial

## A Word About the Fight of the Century

Now that we've gone the distance, I can tell you the truth about SUPERMAN VS. MUHAMMAD ALI. Not the whole truth, of course, but enough of it to whet your appetite without pulling any punches.

First, the simple truth. The book—after fifteen grueling, tension-packed months—is a knockout.

All you comic fans have been awaiting this tabloid for over a year. But SUPERMAN VS. MUHAMMAD ALI now has the non-comic book world clamoring for seats. Ever since the New York *Village Voice* splashed news of the match-up across its front page, nationwide coverage of the book has reached that pitch of childish excitement which only adults can generate.

If somehow you missed the hoopla, let me fill you in.

SUPERMAN VS. MUHAMMAD ALI should be appearing on your newsstand just in time for the New Year. It is without a doubt the most extraordinary over-sized comic book ever produced. Better than SUPERMAN VS. SPIDER-MAN? You can't even compare the two. Just start with the Superman-Ali cover and you'll see why.

The cover wraps around the book so that unfolded it's a poster-size image. As you'd predict, Superman and Ali are slugging it out in the ring. Cheering them on is an impassioned throng. But not your run-of-the-mill spectators. They're the people you'd imagine would actually turn up at a fight like this: Frank Sinatra, Sonny and Cher, Lucille Ball, Pele, Kurt Vonnegut, Johnny Carson, and even President Carter with Rosalynn at his side.

Who else? Well, naturally, fight promoter Don King, and Ali's manager, Herbert Muhammad and his trainer Bundini Brown.

In Superman's corner? The whole raft of DC superstars in their civilian identities. Plus the entire DC staff, a fleet of artists and writers, and the heads of Galaxy Communications (in *their* civilian identities as the heads of Warner Communications).

We had to get permission from every one of those people whose visage appears on the book. Neal Adams (who has executed not only the cover but also each interior page with a lavishness of detail unsurpassed in any comic book) spent weeks drawing individual portraits. When we finally finished with this piece of insanity, there were over one hundred and fifty real people at ringside. We've thoughtfully provided an identifying key so that you, too, can go a little crazy and match the faces with the names.

Credit goes to Julie Schwartz for starting us in the first place. For his efforts on the book, Julie has won this decade's Job award for extreme forebearance beyond the capacity of mortal editors. It was nearly two years ago that Julie made his fatal mistake. The champ was in town and SUPERMAN VS. SPIDER-MAN was on the newsstand.

"Ha-ha," said Julie, brilliantly merging the two events. "SUPERMAN VS. MUHAMMAD ALI. Now *that's* a good one."

And with those words he sealed his doom.

Jest became joust. Our man against theirs. Where was Don King? We had a fight to arrange!

Don was charming but alarming, he hustled, we haggled, he was outrageous, we were courageous; when he demanded 700 percent we held firm and walked out.

Lawyers, phone calls, meetings, meetings, phone calls, phone calls. Two months later we had a deal—with Don. We still had to make a deal with Ali's manager, Herbert Muhammad. Herbert's terms were simple. Total approval of everything.

"It's the only way," he said to me. We were sitting at his kitchen table in Chicago. I wanted his total approval of the story and Neal's first drawings.

The phone over Herbert's head rang. He tilted back his chair to answer it, cited a foreign country, and named a multi-million dollar figure.

"Wait a minute," he said into the receiver and turned to me.

"Do you have a pen? I never can find one when I need one," he apologized.

I took out a pen and told Herbert to keep it. From then on, we were working together.

"Now for the plot," said Herbert, hanging up the phone. Why don't you read it to me?"

So I started to read it and ended up telling it.

"It's good, it's good," Herbert beamed. "It sounds more exciting than the movie script we're considering."

He looked at the three drawings of Ali with infinite care. Minutes passed. Finally, he said:

"They're good, too, but tell the artist to fatten Ali's calves when he does the book. Ali's legs are stronger than that."

Once I returned from Chicago, Neal began laying out pages based on the synopsis that Denny O'Neil and Julie had cooked up. When the first double-page spread came in, we were blown out. No alien spaceships, no intergalactic battle, simply a street in Harlem. But what a street! So packed with the overflow of humanity and visual vignettes that you can study the scene for an hour and still find something new.

On the other hand, the story centers not just on a climactic fight between Earth's two supermen but also on an equally climactic bid for interplanetary control. SUPERMAN VS. MUHAMMAD ALI does have alien spaceships, intergalactic battles and pyrotechnical treats.

It also has Dick Giordano's superlative inks, Terry Austin's mind-boggling backgrounds, Neal's own fine writing, and Herbert Muhammad's total approval every step of the way.

Who wins? All of us. It's been a long, hard fight to put out this incredible book. But we feel like champions. When you see how stupendous the tabloid is, you'll be glad you fought for your copy.

Have a happy, healthy New Year—

Jenette

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### A NEW YOU!

EVERYONE ADMIRES AND RESPECTS A KARATE MASTER!

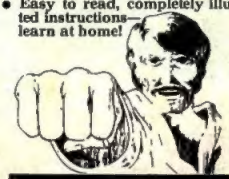
Once you learn the skills of Karate and our Total Self-Defense System — you'll possess a New Self-Confidence that will generate a new you! You'll be able to Master any situation. You can actually become a destructive, fighting, self-defense power machine . . . in the shortest time!! You'll learn the techniques of Karate, Kung-Fu, Judo, Jiu-Jitsu, Savate, Aikido, Tae-Kwon-Do, which add up to the most complete Total Self-Defense System ever!!

Regardless of your age or build . . .

### YOU CAN BECOME MORE POWERFUL!

We'll help you to become aware of the destructive forces you already possess. We'll teach you to channel your forces so that you'll be able to protect yourself from any attacker!

- Learn the secrets of the Ancient Oriental Masters!
- Walk the streets with a New Confidence, feeling safe, knowing you can protect your loved ones.
- Learn all the vulnerable areas of the body—so that you can demolish anybody!
- Destroy any attacker with Super Self-Defense Techniques!
- Easy to read, completely illustrated instructions—learn at home!



### YOU'LL BE DYNAMITE!

**BIG SELF-DEFENSE PACKAGE -- EVERYTHING ONLY $7.**

**MAIL TODAY**

Universal Corporation
Box 39303
Detroit, Michigan 48239

Shoot the 'works' to me!! Rush me that BIG PACKAGE!! I understand the package contains everything, nothing else to buy. Enclosed find full payment of $7 (send cash, check or money order – do not send coins). If under 21 I have permission of my parents.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

# HEAVY DUTY.

## Vans, Pick-ups, 4-wheel drives.

Don't miss the action. These super-styled vehicles have all the latest features you see on the road. The collection even includes two new 4-wheel drive vehicles: the Chevy Off Road Van and the Jeep CJ-7 Renegade.*

All kits are loaded with California styling, raised suspension, custom wheels and latest decals for a mean look.

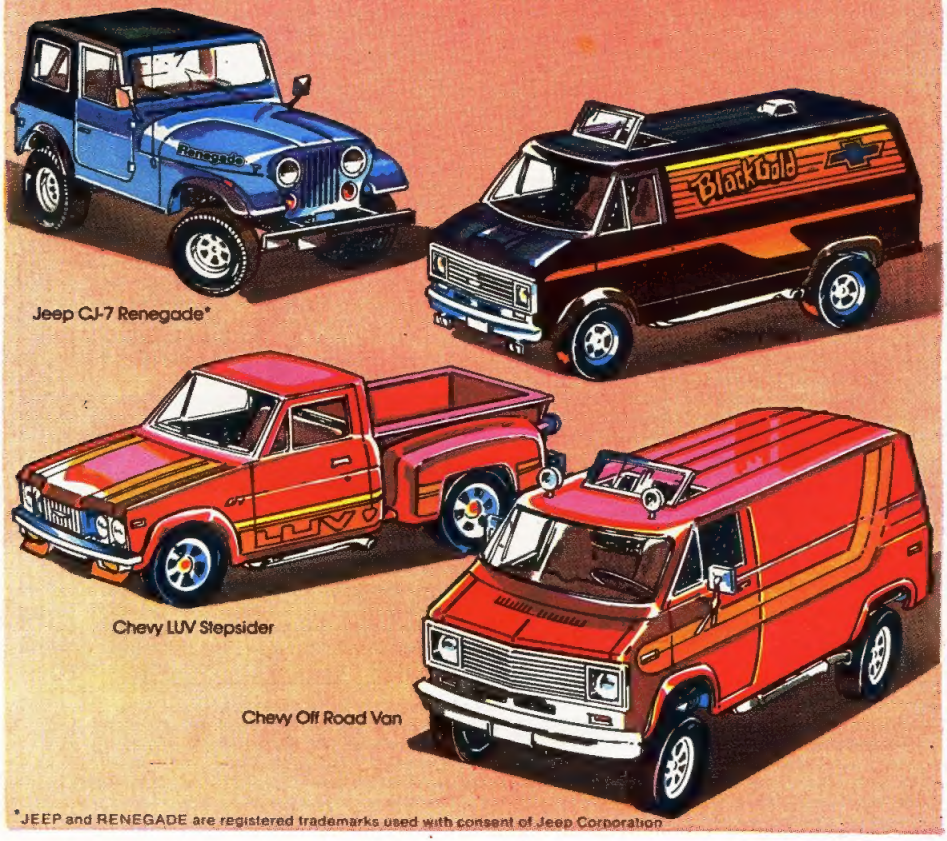
Parts are molded in color, too.

With details like these, you'll be proud to display them! 'Cause every inch looks super-heavy duty.

MONOGRAM

**MONOGRAM MODELS, INC.**
MORTON GROVE, ILL. 60053

**Right. Down to the last detail.**




Jeep CJ-7 Renegade*

Chevy LUV Stepsider

Chevy Off Road Van

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